

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
TRSE-00 HA-05 MCT-02 ACDA-12 NSCE-00 SSO-00
ICAE-00 INRE-00 /093 W
-----099581 151813Z /44

O R 151745Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2124
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 4742

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG WA SF
SUBJECT: NAMIBIA

REF: STATE 205348

1. THE PRETORIA FIVE MET TODAY, AUGUST 15, TO DISCUSS THE CURRENT SITUATION WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO SOUTH AFRICA'S CHARGES OF SWAPO MILITARY ACTIVITIES. NO REPORT WAS PREPARED BUT THE FOLLOWING GENERALLY REFLECTS THE GROUP'S ASSESSMENT.

2. SWAPO GUERRILLA ACTIVITY WITHIN NAMIBIA HAS APPARENTLY INCREASED OVER THE LAST FEW WEEKS. THE FACTS BEHIND THE ALLEGED BUILDUP ALONG THE BORDER OF SWAPO FORCES WITH MPLA AND VUBAN SUPPORT ARE MORE UNCERTAIN. THE SOUTH AFRICANS HAVE SO FAR
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PRESENTED NO CONCRETE EVIDENCE BUT INIST THAT THEIR INTELLIGENCE REPORTS SUCH A BUILD-UP.

3. THE SAG'S CONCERTED EFFORTS TO CALL ATTENTION TO THE CURRENT INCIDENTS IS PRESUMABLY INTENDED IN PART TO SET THE STAGE FOR POSSIBLE REPRISALS IF MORE SUCH PROVOCATIONS OCCUR. THE SAG MAY ALSO HOPE TO PRESSUE THE WEST AND THE UN TO BRING ABOUT

A DE FACTO CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES PRIOR TO THE FINAL SECURITY COUNCIL APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSAL. A SECONDARY CONSIDERATION MAY BE THE SAG'S BELIEF THAT IT CAN DISCREDIT SWAPO INTERNALLY BY UNDERSCORING ITS CONTINUED VIOLENCE.

4. THE PRIVATE ASSERTIONS TO US AND TO THE UN OF A SWAPO MILITARY BUILDUP NORTH OF THE BORDER MAY PORTEND A SAG POSITION THAT ESTABLISHMENT OF SWAPO BASES IN THIS AREA WOULD CONSTITUTE A THREAT WHICH IN TURN WOULD VIOLATE THE "VISIBLE CEASEFIRE." AS THE DEPARTMENT SUGGESTS, IN THIS CASE THE SAG MIGHT TAKE THE POSITION THAT ITS FORCES WOULD NOT WITHDRAW UNTIL THESE SWAPO BASES HAD BEEN REMOVED OR UNTIL THEY WERE UNDER EFFECTIVE UN MONITORING.

5. THE PRETORIA FIVE AGREED THAT A DANGEROUS PERIOD WILL EXIST BETWEEN THE COMPLETION OF AHTAASARI'S VISIT AND THE FINAL SECURITY COUNCIL APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSAL. IT WAS AGREED THAT APPROACHES SHOULD BE MADE TO ALL THE PARTIES CONCERNED URGING RESTRAINT ON BOTH SIDES. GERMAN AMBASSADOR EICK BELIEVED THAT PUBLIC APPEALS FOR A CESSATION OF VIOLENCE BY AHTAASARI COULD BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE, AS IT WOULD UNDERMINE HIS AUTHORITY AND IMAGE OF IMPARTIALITY SHOULD SWAPO IGNORE THE APPEAL. UK AMBASSADOR SIR DAVID SCOTT SUPPORTED EICK IN THIS VIEW. WE ARGUED THAT THE CRITICAL PROBLEM WAS TO AVOID AN ESCALATING SITUATION THAT COULD BE PLAYED UPON BY ELEMENTS ON BOTH SIDES WHO WISHED TO WRECK THE INITIATIVE, AND NOTED THAT WE HAD

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SUGGESTED TO WASHINGTON THAT A NEUTRAL PUBLIC APPEAL BY AHTAASARI OR WALDHEIM WOULD CARRY WEIGHT ON BOTH SIDES.

6. THE GROUP AGREED THAT PRIVATE APPEALS BY THE UN OFFICIALS TO THE FRONT-LINE STATES AND SWAPO AS WELL AS THE SAG COULD BE PRODUCTIVE. IN ADDITION, THE GROUP FELT IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR THE WESTERN GOVERNMENTS TO FOLLOW--UP ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS. ON WESTERN HEAD OF GOVERNMENT, FOR EXAMPLE, MIGHT CORRESPOND DIRECTLY WITH PRIME MINISTER VORSTER COMMENTING ON THE PROMISING BEGINNING OF AHTAASARI'S VISIT AND EMPHASIZING THE PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE OF RESTRAINT PRIOR TO THE ADOPTION OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S REPORT AND AN IMPLEMENTATION RESOLUTION BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL.

7. INDIVIDUAL WESTERN LEADERS COULD ALSO CONVEY THEIR CONCERNS ON THE DANGER OF A MILITARY ESCALATION TO THE FRONT-LINE STATES WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON ANGOLA.

EDMONDSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY BUILDUP, ALLEGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978PRETOR04742
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780333-1116
Format: TEL
From: PRETORIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780863/aaaacajc.tel
Line Count: 112
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 20ff8563-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 205348
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1736562
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NAMIBIA
TAGS: PORG, MILI, WA, SF
To: STATE USUN NEW YORK
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/20ff8563-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014